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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**IRONBARK**

23 JUL 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (SECRET): "On Fire Preparation and Fire Support of an Offensive", by Colonel V. Paleyev

1. Enclosed is a verbatim translation of an article from the SECRET Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" published by the Ministry of Defense, USSR, and distributed down to the level of division commander.

2. For convenience of reference by USIB agencies, the codeword IRONBARK has been assigned to this series of TOP SECRET CSDB reports containing documentary Soviet material. The word IRONBARK is classified CONFIDENTIAL and is to be used only among persons authorized to read and handle this material.

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Richard Helms
Deputy Director (Plans)

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Original: The Director of Central Intelligence

cc: The Director of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director for Intelligence,
The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence
Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
U. S. Air Force

The Director, National Security Agency

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COUNTRY : USSR


SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (SECRET): "On Fire Preparation and Fire Support of an Offensive", by Colonel V. Paleyev

DATE OF INFO : August 1961


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Following is a verbatim translation of an article entitled "On Fire Preparation and Fire Support of an Offensive", which was written by Colonel V. Paleyev.

This article appeared in Issue 5 (60) of 1961 of a special version of the Soviet journal Military Thought which is classified SECRET by the Soviets and is published irregularly. Issue 5 (60) was sent to press on 25 August 1961.  contained the Table of Contents for this issue.

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 Comment: Military Thought is published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in three versions, classified RESTRICTED, SECRET, and TOP SECRET. The RESTRICTED version has been issued monthly since 1937, while the other two versions are issued irregularly. The TOP SECRET version was initiated in early 1960. By the end of 1961, 61 issues of the SECRET version had been published, 6 of them during 1961.

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On Fire Preparation and Fire Support of an Offensive

by


Colonel V. Paleyev

Not too long ago the decisive force in achieving success in a battle or operation was the infantry and tanks, and the fire weapons were called in to prepare and support their combat operations when breaking through the enemy defense, developing the offensive in the depth, encircling and destroying the encircled enemy groupings, and also assisting in repelling the enemy offensive in the defense. Artillery had a fairly limited effective range, and therefore was mainly used for direct support of advancing troops. To destroy objectives in the depth, first of all the reserves, aircraft armed with ammunition having conventional or chemical charges were called in. Their capabilities in connection with this were limited.

As neither artillery nor aircraft had the capability to destroy the enemy reliably over the entire depth of his operational formation, and could not play a decisive role in the enemy's destruction, their operations were called "artillery and aircraft preparation and support of an offensive" in our service regulations.

A modern offensive operation is characterized by the mass use of nuclear weapons over the entire depth of the enemy operational formation with a simultaneous troop offensive at high speeds and the use of a large number of airborne (amphibious) forces having various compositions and designations.

In connection with the use of nuclear weapons in an operation, new concepts were introduced - nuclear preparation and nuclear support of an offensive. Lately nuclear,




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artillery, and aircraft preparation were combined into fire preparation and support of an offensive, the basis of which, under modern conditions, is composed of nuclear strikes.

It is known that with the introduction of nuclear/missile weapons into the troops, the role and significance of fire weapons have changed sharply. Nuclear/missile weapons have completely new capabilities. In essence they are distinguished by their unlimited power, great effective range, relatively high accuracy of fire, and their capability to destroy the enemy reliably over the entire depth of his operational formation. The nuclear/missile weapon became the basic method for achieving victory in an operation. Gradually the infantry and tanks are turning into only a means for completing the enemy's destruction. They are assigned the mission of consolidating as fast as possible the results attained by the use of nuclear weapons. With this, the operations of tanks and infantry become separate battles with isolated enemy groupings which sometimes are not even united by a single centralized command.

On the basis of what has been said it becomes apparent that the terms "fire preparation" and "fire support" do not correspond to the tasks assigned to fire weapons in an offensive operation and do not stress the main (prevalent) role of nuclear weapons. And this, in turn, leads in practice to a striving to adapt the new fire weapons to former forms of troop actions in an operation, and this slows down the further development of military art.

In actuality, who is supported or backed up by nuclear weapons (if one examines this in the total system of the operation), for whom do they prepare the offensive? We know that the main purpose of nuclear weapons is the destruction of enemy troop groupings, his fire means, and other important objectives. The use of nuclear weapons permits the achievement of the ultimate aim of the operation in a short time.

Consequently, fire weapons, the basis of which consists of nuclear weapons, do not prepare an offensive but they advance simultaneously or in a short period of time, enveloping



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the entire depth of a huge territory with their action.


Let us examine very briefly the procedure for using nuclear weapons in an offensive operation which is conducted during a war when intelligence organs are working at full force and quite effectively.

Until now this was presented as follows. During the period of preparation for the offensive operation the fire weapons (first of all, nuclear weapons) carry on combat to achieve fire superiority by destroying the enemy's nuclear weapons and other important objectives. As a rule all this is accomplished by delivering single or, less frequently, group nuclear strikes.

Having achieved fire superiority and accumulated an adequate amount of forces and weapons, the troops shift to the offensive, carrying out preliminary fire preparation (it is considered that out of the number of nuclear warheads issued for the operation the larger part will be allotted for the latter). During the period of fire preparation, nuclear weapons will destroy newly disclosed enemy means of nuclear attack, his troop groupings in the tactical zone and basic operational reserves (over the entire depth of the mission), objectives of military-industrial significance, and aircraft on airfields. The control and PVO systems are disrupted, and several other missions are fulfilled. A necessary condition for the successful achievement of the main goal - the reliable destruction of the enemy over the entire depth of the operation - is effective intelligence and the presence of an adequate amount of nuclear warheads and means to deliver them to the targets.

Thus, the success of the entire operation as a whole is actually predetermined by the successful operations of the fire weapons in the periods of preparation and fire preparation.

The question arises: for whom is the fire preparation



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conducted? The term itself speaks of preparation of conditions for successful operations by some decisive force. But we have already determined that under modern conditions this decisive force is nuclear weapons. It turns out that nuclear weapons, as the basis of fire means, carry out fire preparation for themselves. Can we approach this question in this manner? Of course not. According to its nature and the significance of the tasks being fulfilled during this period, fire preparation is nothing other than the beginning of the offensive.

Fire support of an offensive in the former sense meant the fire support of advancing troops in their successive seizure of lines or objectives in the depth of the enemy defense, the repelling of counterstrikes, and the commitment of second echelons or reserves to the engagement. To examine the use now of nuclear weapons in the same plane means giving it the supporting and not the decisive role in achieving success in an operation.

As we know, during an offensive, nuclear weapons are used to destroy newly discovered enemy means of nuclear attack, reserves which have been newly discovered or not previously destroyed, and other objectives and targets. Efforts of the enemy to create large groupings of fire weapons, aircraft, and troops, and, first of all, of tanks to deliver counterstrikes are eliminated by the timely delivery of massed nuclear strikes.

Thus, even during this period, the fire means and, first of all, the nuclear weapons as the basic force are used with decisive purposes for the swift achievement of success in the operation by destroying the enemy. Using the results of the employment of nuclear weapons and other weapons, tanks and the infantry strive to seize the territory more quickly in order to consolidate the success achieved.

Consequently, the term "fire support" of an offensive is also unfortunate, because it does not reflect the main role of fire weapons and of the nuclear weapons, first of all,

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in achieving success in an operation.

In our opinion, instead of the terms "fire preparation" and "fire support" the term "fire offensive" should be introduced as the one that corresponds more closely to the nature of conducting a modern offensive operation and shows the prevalent role of fire weapons, mainly nuclear ones, in achieving victory.

As a rule, the fire offensive should start with a fire strike carried out simultaneously or in a short period of time by the greater part of the nuclear weapons, artillery, and partially by the front (army) aviation against the entire depth of the enemy operational formation, with the aim of destroying newly discovered enemy means of nuclear attack, the most important groupings of his troops, and other objectives by means of delivering massed group and single strikes with nuclear, chemical, and conventional ammunition. During this strike, the troop control system and the PVO system should also be destroyed, the rear area should be disorganized, and the enemy's will for organized resistance should be broken.

Right after this strike, troop combat operations are immediately carried out over the entire territory embraced by the front (army) mission. The fire weapons continue the fire offensive until the front (army) mission is fulfilled, i.e., until the operation is concluded.

During a fire offensive, several fire strikes are carried out. Undoubtedly, the first one is the most powerful one. The strength of the subsequent fire strikes will depend on the conditions of the situation and, mainly, on the number of fire weapons ready to deliver a strike and the number of disclosed enemy objectives.

Combat to retain fire superiority continues during the offensive. It is conducted by delivering strikes against discovered enemy nuclear weapons, artillery, airfields, and other objectives.


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The fire offensive is the basis of the general offensive of front troops. Fire strikes with which the fire offensive starts and is carried out, until the successful conclusion of the operation as a whole, are components of the fire offensive.

The fire offensive is preceded by a preparation period during which employment is planned and preparation is conducted of fire weapons, first of all nuclear ones, for the fire offensive, nuclear warheads are amassed, regrouping of troops is carried out, etc. The basic mission of fire weapons during this period is achieving fire superiority over the enemy as the decisive condition for achieving success in the operation.

The propositions advanced in this article will be correct for conditions when front troops have an adequate amount of means in their complement to deliver nuclear warheads to the targets and when an adequate amount of nuclear warheads is allotted for the front offensive operation.


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